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INTERNATIONAL CONCILIATION

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THE INTERNATIONAL MIND

OPENING ADDRESS AT THE LAKE MOHONK CONFERENCE
ON INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION, MAY 15, 1912



BY

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

President of Columbia University, President of the American
Association for International Conciliation

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American Association for International Conciliation
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The Executive Committee of the Association for International Conciliation wish to arouse the interest of the American people in the progress of the movement for promoting international peace and relations of comity and good fellowship between nations. To this end they print and circulate documents giving information as to the progress of these movements, in order that individual citizens, the newspaper press, and organizations of various kinds may have readily available accurate information on these subjects. A list of publications will be found on page 15.

THE INTERNATIONAL MIND

OPENING ADDRESS OF NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

As Presiding Officer of the Lake Mohonk Conference on International
Arbitration, May 15, 1912

At the time of our gathering one year ago it was natural and almost inevitable that a note of congratulation and happy augury should be sounded. All the signs both at home and abroad seemed propitious, and those who had labored so long and so earnestly to promote the cause of international justice and international peace could reasonably feel that substantial progress toward the goal of their hopes had been made. To-day we meet in a somewhat different atmosphere. Many of us find ourselves troubled by doubts and harassed by disappointment. Within sixty days after the Conference of 1911 had risen, two of the greatest, most powerful, and most enlightened nations known to history were widely believed to be on the verge of armed conflict about something which nobody was able to understand or to explain. The newspaper press of the world was filled with the most terrifying alarms. Charges and countercharges, suspicions and countersuspensions, were heralded all round the globe and the hearts of the lovers of peace with justice sank within them. All at once modern civilization seemed bankrupt, and the western world suddenly appeared as if approaching a cataclysm. Nevertheless, the oft-predicted contest did not take place. Strong, brave, enlightened men were at the helm of state and they conducted their grave business with so much discretion, with so much tact, and with so much

genuine statesmanship that the threatened danger was averted. Let us sincerely hope that it was averted forever.

It would be a pleasant task to tell in this company, if it were permissible, the detailed story of last summer's fateful work for war, and of what may well prove to have been last summer's epoch-making work for peace.

It is easy to run with the crowd and to follow the example of that French revolutionary who, hearing the noise and the roar of the street, cried out "There go the people; I must follow them, for I am their leader." But to stand with patience and self-control in a post of high responsibility when a strong current of public opinion goes sweeping by, careless of consequences and unrestrained in its expression of feeling, is the mark of a real man. This Conference should hold in everlasting honor the German Emperor and the responsible statesmen of France, Germany and Great Britain, who solved the difficulties and allayed the dangers of the summer of 1911 without permitting the precipitation of a colossal and devastating war. The Nobel Prize might appropriately be awarded to some one of those who then kept the doors of the Temple of Janus shut when mighty pressure was exerted to force them open.

The world is not likely to know until many years have passed and until the chief participants in the international business of last summer are dead and gone, just how grave the crisis was, just how trivial and how sordid were the causes that led to that crisis, and just how bravely and how honorably that crisis was met and averted by responsible statesmen.

The consideration by the Senate of the United States of the projected treaties of general arbitration with Great Britain and with France came to a rather lame and impotent conclusion. The debate, fortunately conducted in open session, revealed that few members of the Senate have any real grasp of our international relations or any genuine appreciation of our international responsibilities. It is fair to say that a very large majority of the Senate approached the consideration of these treaties with entire good will and with favorable mind. They appeared, however, to be so little accustomed to the study of international business and to reflecting upon the relation of treaties like these to the movement of the best opinion throughout the world, that many of them were easily led to give weight to obstacles and difficulties that were either irrelevant or wholly unimportant. As was to be expected, while the treaties were under discussion the boisterous elements of our population, those that love to talk of war and to threaten it as well as to decry peace and to poke fun at it, were heard from under not incompetent leadership.

A yet more unhappy and discouraging event was the breaking out of armed hostilities between Italy and Turkey, two powers signatory to The Hague Conventions of 1899, without any recourse being had to the provisions of those Conventions which would, it may with certainty be said, have made a subsequent resort to arms either impossible or ridiculous.

These events of the past year serve to illustrate once more the real difficulties which confront us,

and to set the problem of obtaining peace through justice in a yet clearer light. We must learn to bring to the consideration of public business in its international aspects what I may call the international mind, and the international mind is still rarely to be found in high places. That the international mind is not inconsistent with sincere and devoted patriotism is clearly shown by the history of the great Liberal statesmen of the nineteenth century who had to deal with the making of Europe as we know it. If Lord Palmerston had the international mind not at all, surely Mr. Gladstone had it in high degree. The late Marquis of Salisbury, whom no one ever accused of lacking devotion to national policies and purposes, had it also, although a Tory of the Tories. Cavour certainly had it, as did Thiers. Lord Morley has it, and so has his colleague Lord Haldane. The late Senator Hoar had it when on a somewhat important occasion he expressed the hope that he should never so act as to place his country's interests above his country's honor. It was the possession of this international mind that gave to the brilliant administrations of Secretary Hay and Secretary Root their distinction and their success. The lack of it has marked other administrations of foreign affairs, both in the United States and in European countries, either with failure or with continuing and strident friction.

What is this international mind, and how are we to seek for it and to gain it as a possession of our own and of our country? The international mind is nothing else than that habit of thinking of foreign relations and business, and that habit of dealing with them, which regard the several nations of the civil-

ized world as friendly and coöperating equals in aiding the progress of civilization, in developing commerce and industry, and in spreading enlightenment and culture throughout the world. It is as inconsistent with the international mind to attempt to steal some other nation's territory as it would be inconsistent with the principles of ordinary morality to attempt to steal some other individual's purse. Magnitude does not justify us in dispensing with morals.

When Secretary Hay said that American diplomacy had but two controlling maxims, the golden rule and the open door, he spoke with an international mind. The policy of swagger, that of swinging sticks either big or little, and that of threatening to double or treble the military armaments and preparations of some other nation, are not compatible with the possession of an international mind. We are still a long way from the millennium, no doubt, and the lion and the lamb are not yet likely to lie down side by side with entire restraint of appetite on the part of the lion or with entire assurance on the part of the lamb. Nevertheless, we might as well be making progress, or trying to make it, and not allow ourselves to sit forever helpless under the blighting domination of the brute instincts of mankind, with all their unscrupulousness, their fierce cruelty and their passionate clamor.

In striving to gain the international mind, it is necessary first of all to learn to measure other peoples and other civilizations than ours from their own point of view and by their own standards rather than by our own. Human knowledge has not yet been able to master and to explain the meaning of the profound dif-

ferences of race or those extraordinary traits which, when grouped together, appear to constitute national character. What we do know is that there is plainly place in the world for numerous races, for many nationalities, and, therefore, for different points of view and for different angles of reflection. The really vital question is whether the time has yet come, and if not what can we do to hasten its coming, when races and nationalities are able to cease preying upon and oppressing one another, and to live together as fellow sharers in a world's civilization? In other words, the vital question is how far the fundamental principles of morality that as individuals we so ardently profess, have really taken hold of us in our corporate capacity. There are still current, and apparently popular, many phrases and political cries which indicate that we have no very profound faith in the dominance of moral principle, and no very clear ethical conviction as to our own national duty. Here in the United States it is the easiest thing possible for some public man or some newspaper to arouse suspicion and ill-feeling against Japan, against Mexico, against England, or against Germany by inventing a few facts and then adequately emphasizing them. In not a few of the unpleasant international discussions of the past few years, the people of the United States have been the chief offenders. We are given to looking with far too much leniency upon a braggadocio and a bravado which ape true courage and genuine patriotism, as well as upon those wearisome platitudes which are a convenient refuge for those who refuse to learn to think.

It is astonishing how even men of the highest in-

telligence and the largest responsibility will be swept off their feet in regard to international matters at some moment of strong national feeling, or on the occasion of some incident which appeals powerfully to the sentiments or to the passions of the people. At the very moment when the nation most needs the guidance of its sober-minded leaders of opinion, that guidance is likely to be found wanting.

Mr. Charles Francis Adams in a paper on the Trent 'Affair which he read before the Massachusetts Historical Society in November last, has given a very illuminating example of happenings of this kind. In that paper Mr. Adams has made both a valuable addition to our historical knowledge, and also an acute and penetrating study of the psychology of international politics. He points out that probably at no time in the earlier history of the United States had the American people been so completely carried away by feeling, losing for the moment possession of their senses, as during the weeks which immediately followed the seizure of Mason and Slidell. Not only were the people swept off their feet, but men of light and leading, jurists, constitutional lawyers and men of state joined in a violent and passionate cry which time and reflection have shown to be absolutely without justification. The situation in England was quite as serious. John Bright in writing at the time to Charles Sumner on this subject, spoke of the sensation which had been caused in Great Britain by taking the Southern commissioners from an English ship, and added that "the ignorant and passionate and 'Rule Britannia' class are angry and insolent as usual." One who wishes to know how difficult it is to acquire

the international mind and to sustain it in the presence of a great wave of national feeling, has only to read this important paper by Mr. Adams. He will then see how true it is, as Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg said to the Reichstag a few days ago, that wars are not planned and brought about in these days by governments, but noisy and fanatical minorities drive nations into wars.

We Americans need the international mind as much as any people ever needed it. We shall never be able to do justice to our better selves or to take our true part in the modern world until we acquire it. We must learn to suppress rather than to exalt those who endeavor, whether through ignorance, selfishness or malice, to stir up among us antagonism to other nations and to other peoples. If we are to take the place which many of us have fondly hoped America would take, at the very forefront of the movement for the establishment of a world peace based upon even-handed justice, we must first learn to rule our tongues and to turn deaf ears to those who, from time to time, endeavor to lead us away from the path of international rectitude and international honor with false cries of a pseudo-patriotism.

Let me offer, from the recent Senate debate on the treaties of general arbitration, an example or two of the notions that must be removed from the minds of important men before we can make much progress with our cause and before we can gain the international mind.

On March 5 last, Senator Heyburn of Idaho, told the Senate this: "There never has been a time in the history of the world when any progress was made

through peaceful agreements. I repeat it, there has been no time in the history of the world when progress toward civilization or a higher condition of mankind was made by a contract or agreement. Every advance step toward what we term civilization to-day has been the result of war. A rule that has been tried out through so great a period of time is entitled to some respect. It ought not to be brushed aside by the novice in political or public affairs. . . . We grow philanthropic, we grow sentimental—I had almost said maudlin—over the brotherhood of man. No nation ever existed fifteen minutes based upon the brotherhood of man; no community ever did.”

These are doughty assertions. By the terms of the Constitution of the United States the eminent Senator who spoke them cannot be questioned for them in any other place. Where, however, a question would be unconstitutional, a gesture of wonder and perhaps one even bordering on inquiry may be permissible! Do these strongly expressed opinions really represent with accuracy and truth the teachings of history? One must wonder just a little whether the Senator from Idaho had recently had time to refresh his knowledge of the history of civilization and of European diplomacy. Obviously the possession of what I have called an international mind is quite incompatible with opinions such as these.

Two days later, while participating in the same debate, Senator Hitchcock of Nebraska expressed somewhat peremptorily the conviction that the forces behind the pending treaty of arbitration with Great Britain did not really find their chief interest in arbitration at all, but rather in bringing about an

alliance between Great Britain and the United States. The learned Senator did not stop to indicate how an identical treaty with France and a proposed treaty of similar form with Germany could be reconciled with this notion of an alliance. He was, nevertheless, very determined in regard to the matter, and concluded his speech with the declaration that the purpose of the pending treaties was "to make a false union, a real alliance between the United States and Great Britain." If Senator Hitchcock occupied a less exalted position than that of a Senator of the United States, a private citizen might perhaps be permitted to exclaim, "In the name of the Prophet, Bosh!"

The notion that a treaty, by the terms of which two nations engage to submit any differences which may arise between them to judicial determination, is in some way equivalent to a political alliance, is one of the most curious that now finds lodgment either in the senatorial or in the public mind. Some time ago in speaking of this phase of the matter I offered the suggestion that anyone who could mistake an arbitration treaty for an alliance might be expected to confuse a law suit with a marriage. For this I was suitably rebuked by having it pointed out to me that I did not understand the point of view of those who held this opinion. I was forced to accept the rebuke in humble silence, for I knew that it was true; I certainly do not understand the point of view of those who confound an arbitration treaty with a political alliance. If anybody does understand that point of view I hope that at an appropriate time he will make it clear to the rest of us.

There is a curious and interesting interdependence

between reasonableness and sanity in the conduct of domestic politics on the one hand, and kindly feeling and generous sympathy in our attitude toward foreign relations on the other. A nation that is either intellectually, morally or politically turbulent, is not in any position to assume leadership in the development of international affairs on a peace-loving and orderly basis. The political braggart at home is the political bully abroad. Unfortunately, our contemporary American public life offers illustrations in abundance of the unhappy effects of constantly carrying on political discussion, both on the platform and in the press, with the manners of the prize ring and the language of the lunatic asylum. A large part of the American public has become so accustomed to highly seasoned political food that it is no longer satisfied with a merely nutritious political diet. We Americans must be content to wait until the present unhappy tide of turbulence and bad manners has ebbed before we can venture to lay claim once more to a place of leadership in the development of constructive international policies. Reform of international procedure, like charity, begins at home.

Most of all, we must do our best to lift political discussion, both national and international, up out of the mire of personality and unseemly controversies between individuals and private interests on to the high ground of principle. It is not fashionable just now in some influential quarters to have any fixed principles. There are those who think it becoming to court the favor of the populace by inquiring of them, as did the frightened peasants of Louis XI, "Sire, what are our opinions?" There are others who ap-

pear to emulate the example of Artemus Ward who, when asked what were his principles replied: "I have no principles; I am in the show business."

It is in the highest degree important that upon all this sort of thing we should turn our backs. Political progress, whether national or international, must depend upon trust in the better instincts of the people, and cannot rest upon their appetites and their passions, their envies and their animosities. A vast majority of the people of the United States are God-fearing, law-abiding, devoted to liberty and order, and sincerely desirous of promoting the common welfare. Unhappily, political exploiters and promoters with vast quantities of watered political stock to dispose of, are just now keeping up such a din and are so skilfully organizing the adventurous elements of the population that real public opinion, our true national character, and the genuine public will are for the moment quite in the background. At the moment we are being ruled and represented by the noisy and well-organized majorities of minorities, and we are sliding backward in political dignity and political wisdom every hour. When the people as a whole grasp this fact, as they surely will, they will assert themselves with no uncertain voice, and our nation will once more put its feet in the path of progress. The moment that sober reason resumes its rule, our cause will be secure. Human progress cannot be held long in check by selfish endeavor, and both at home and abroad we may look forward with confidence and abundant hope to the coming of the day when justice shall rule, and when a lasting peace, based upon justice, shall set free all man's resources for man's uplifting.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Nos. 1-48, inclusive (April, 1907-November, 1911). Including papers by Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, George Trumbull Ladd, Elihu Root, Barrett Wendell, Charles E. Jefferson, Seth Low, William James, Andrew Carnegie, Philander C. Knox, Pope Pius X, and others. A list of titles and authors will be sent on application.

In German: Deutschland und Grossbritannien; eine Studie über Nationale Eigentümlichkeiten, by Lord Haldane.

49. The Anglo-American Arbitration Treaty, by Heinrich Lammasch; and Forces Making for International Conciliation and Peace, by Jackson H. Ralston. December, 1911.

Special Bulletin: Address at Peace Dinner, December 30, by Andrew Carnegie. December, 1911.

50. Finance and Commerce: Their Relation to International Good Will; A Collection of Papers by Sereno S. Pratt, Isaac N. Seligman, E. H. Outerbridge, Thomas F. Woodlock, and George Paish. January, 1912.

51. Do the Arts Make for Peace? by Frank Jewett Mather, Jr. February, 1912.

52. An Anthropologist's View of War, by Franz Boas. March, 1912.

Special Bulletin: Great Britain and Germany; A Study in National Characteristics, by Lord Haldane. March, 1912.

53. The Mirage of the Map, by Norman Angell. April, 1912.

54. Philosophy of the Third American Peace Congress, by Theodore Marburg. May, 1912.

Special Bulletin: War Practically Preventable, and Arguments for Universal Peace, by Rev. Michael Clune, June, 1912.

55. The International Mind. Opening Address at the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration, by Nicholas Murray Butler, June, 1912.

Up to the limit of the editions printed, any one of the above will be sent postpaid upon receipt of a request addressed to the Secretary of the American Association for International Conciliation, Postoffice Sub-station 84, New York, N. Y.

A small edition of a monthly bibliography of articles having to do with international matters is also published and distributed to libraries, magazines and newspapers.

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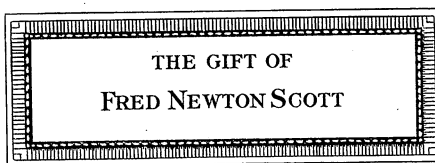
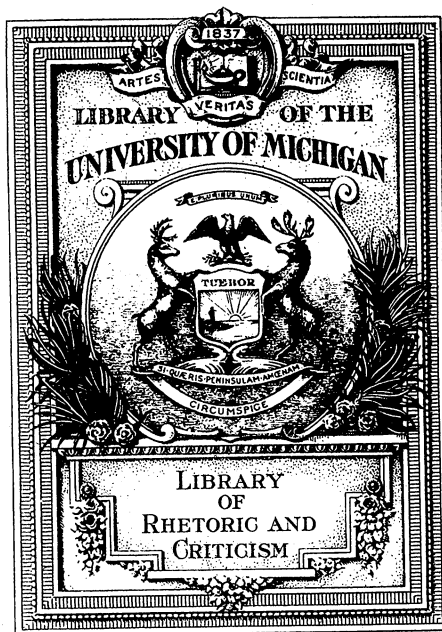
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